collaborating in the planned constellation of National Polar-Orbiting Operational Environmental Satellites System (NPOESS), primarily for application related to weather, atmosphere, oceans, land and near-space environment. Towards the above, NPOESS payloads characteristics, concept of operation and system architecture etc., have been exchanged for working out further details.

(c) Defence implications, if any, will be examined during the course of detailed evaluation of the arrangement for collaboration.

Thematic Satellite

1021. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) by when, ISRO is going to develop the series of thematic satellites for communication and remote sensing application in education, health, map-making, ocean sensing research, etc;

(b) the details of other satellites which are part of the thematic satellites;

(c) whether it is a fact that ISRO is planing to set up an operational disaster management support services network as a part of this series; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has already deployed thematic satellites in the area of Oceanographic research by launching Oceansat-1 in May 1999; natural resources study by launching Resourcesat-1 in October 2003, and also provided needed capacity from its communication satellites for the purpose of education, telemedicine and development communication.

(b) ISRO is launching an exclusive EDUSAT in September 2004 dedicated for education; CARTOSAT 1 & 2 in 2005 for carrying out cartographic applications; followed by a Radar Imaging Satellite (RISAT) for microwave thematic applications.

(c) and (d) A decision support system for disaster management is in the process of being set up at the National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) of the Department of Space, mainly using space based observation and communications systems.